

measurements of German prisoners of war in England. Ripley is quoted continually and so is Beddoe, and this is to the good, but it seems less fortunate that the author is also continually driven to quote Ammon about Germany, for Ammon's work is more than suspected of being affected by political considerations. A long and elaborate appendix discusses the Jews in Europe largely on the basis of Fishberg's well known work.

Altogether this is a book interesting from many points of view and valuable as a semi-popular exposition as well as because it at least tries to get away from political attitudes in several parts. It should not, however, be thought of as the definite Racial Book of the German People; that is still to be written and much more preliminary work is necessary before it is attempted.

H. J. FLEURE.

**Stoddard, Lothrop.** *The Revolt against Civilisation.* Chapman and Hall, pp. 255. Price 16/-.

It cannot be said that eugenics has on the whole been fortunate in its advocates. Too often they have given expression to such exaggerated views that openings have been given to Mr. Chesterton and other fanatical opponents. At least two thirds of Mr. Stoddard's book are filled with a denunciation of Bolshevism, socialism and syndicalism, and of so crude and hysterical a kind that a sober-minded reader might fail to grasp the significance of the remaining third. It may even be feared that the effect of the author's violent diatribes may be to prejudice many readers against what is really valuable in his work. Many of his statements are obviously open to dispute; he uses phrases which he does not define and which seem to have different meanings in different places. In more than one passage he contradicts himself.

In the opening pages of the first chapter he twice says that "civilization depends absolutely upon quality." But civilization does not run an even course. "Some civilizations, like those of Egypt and China, endured for thousands of years, others for centuries; still others for a few brief generations." There is, however, no law of civilization and decay. "Given a high-type stock producing an adequate quota of superior individuals, and a civilization might be immortal." There are three reasons why this has not happened: (1) the tendency to structural overloading; (2) "the tendency to biological regression"; (3) "the tendency to atavistic revolt." By the first he means that "the complexity (and therefore the burden) of a civilization may increase with a tremendous rapidity to an inconceivable degree" and as a result "the complex super-structure of civilization tends to overload the human foundations." The differential birth-rate is the cause of the tendency to biological regression. So far the argument is fairly clear though it may be remarked that, if decline in civilization is due to "structural overloading," in any degree, it cannot be true that "civilization depends absolutely upon quality."

The argument founded upon "the tendency to atavistic revolt" plays a large part in the later chapters. In the author's own words there are in any civilised society "primitives" who "have not the

capacity to keep pace," "degenerates," that is to say the "imbeciles, feeble-minded and insane," and the "Under-Men." The Under-Man "measures under the standards of capacity and adaptability required by the social order in which he lives." To the Under Man "civilization offers few benefits and fewer hopes . . . . Sooner or later he instinctively sees that he is a failure, that civilization's prizes are not for him." So he revolts "not merely against imperfections in the social order but against the social order itself. . . . The basic attitude of the Under-Man is an instinctive and natural revolt against civilization." The Under-Man is led on to revolt by the different types of which one, the "misguided superior, is probably the most pathetic figure in human history. Flattered by designing scoundrels, used to sanctify sinister schemes, and pushed forward as a figurehead during the early states of revolutionary agitation, the triumph of revolution brings him to a tragic end. Horrified at the sight of barbarism's unmasked law, he tries to stay its destructive course. In vain! The Under-Man turns upon his former champion with a snarl and tramples him in the mud."

The two following chapters contain many important facts regarding the decline in the birth-rate with which readers of the REVIEW are unhappily only too familiar. The closing chapters recommend remedies that have nothing novel about them. The intervening chapters take the form of an elaboration of the theme of the "Under-Man" and as this theme is really the burden of the book we may confine what we have to say to an examination of Mr. Stoddard's views on this matter. To him the history of the development of socialism is in the main to be interpreted as the effort of the "Under-Man" to destroy civilization. The French Revolution, the revolutions of 1848 and the Russian Revolution are all explained in this manner. The first criticism of this view is an obvious one. The decline in the birth-rate in the upper social classes began in the latter half of the last century. Granting that this decline implies unfavourable germinal change, there is therefore no reason to think that this cause of change was in progress before the French Revolution. Nor is there any reason to suspect that there was any other factor in operation leading to unfavourable germinal changes at that time. We have thus no reason for supposing that a multiplication of "Under-Men" preceded the French Revolution. Again of all countries in Europe, Russia had probably been least affected by the differential birth-rate. In any case the Russian population has not been drained by the operation of the social ladder. There is thus no general correspondence between the operation of factors known to, or suspected to, cause unfavourable change and the rise of revolutionary feeling. Secondly, on general grounds and in the light of history it may be doubted whether unfavourable change would not be more likely to lead to growing apathy and listlessness rather than to violence and revolution. The multiplication of inferior types would make it increasingly difficult to maintain intact the complex structure of civilization. A retrogression might not be a simple process; it might go in a series of jerks, of minor upheavals. But this is not what our author has in mind. His attention is fixed, to the exclusion of almost everything else, upon the growth of revolutionary feeling.

And the explanation of this phenomenon is surely wholly different. A large number of writers have commented upon the evil influence of urban conditions and upon the tyranny which machinery exercises over the industrial part of the population. Revolutionary feeling is evidently in the main a reaction against these elements which dominate life in industrial countries. It may be a blind reaction; it may end disastrously. But it is not due to unfavourable germinal change in the fashion that Mr. Stoddard supposes.

It is with a feeling of regret that we close this book. Here is one of the few writers on social problems who has grasped the significance of heredity. But he spoils his case. He does not define the terms he employs; no well founded argument informs the whole discussion. Armed with a facile rhetoric he crowds his pages with sensational statements. The book does not advance our knowledge of eugenic problems; it will not convince serious students of social matters who have not yet recognised the importance of heredity. If in these respects it is ineffective, at least it does no harm. Unfortunately, however, it lends itself too obviously to ridicule on the part of those who take every opportunity to discredit eugenics.

A.M. C-S.

**Barrett, Florence E. C.B.E., M.D.** *Conception Control*. John Murray, London, 1922. 2s.

IN this short essay of but 48 pages, Lady Barrett discusses the advantages and drawbacks of the practice of contraception in a wise and candid manner. Among the points which have received attention, but which are too generally overlooked, is the rapid falling off of natural fertility with increasing age. Lady Barrett points out that of those who postpone childbearing until the wife is 30, many will be involuntarily childless. She therefore advises that limitation, if economically necessary, should be practised after the desired number of children has been borne, and never in normal cases at the beginning of married life.

Lady Barrett does not ignore the eugenic effects of contraception practices; on the contrary the eugenic damage which has occurred, and is occurring owing to their adoption by the Middle and Upper classes is clearly set out; as are the difficulties which stand in the way of the adoption of contraception, by any but the most capable and foresighted, of the working classes. The warnings given in Chapter IV as to the national efforts of the lower birth rate of the upper classes are by no means overstressed.

Unfortunately Lady Barrett appears to accept the somewhat fantastic theory advocated by Mr. Pell, that the chief cause of the differential birth-rate, lies in the overnutrition of the upper and the undernutrition of the lower classes, and this belief leads her to suggest as a remedy the raising of the standard of living of working class mothers, combined with a more simple life for the more richly endowed. The practical working of such a programme would no doubt take the form of increased taxation of the overtaxed middle class, with consequent increase in birth limitation, together with the entire removal of economic motives for postponing marriage or limiting offspring in those classes which are already too prolific.